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Secrecy, Terror, Control

The new director of central intelligence, Adm. Stansfield Turner, says he'll review CIA operations and try to cut secrecy to the minimum necessary. But he concedes, like President Carter, that there has to be some hush-hush.

A big case in point: Adm. Turner told Washington reporters last week that the press' revelation of undercover payments to Jordan's King Hussein undermined (as parodied in today's cartoon) other countries' faith that they can deal constructively with the U. S. in confidence.

Another case, not in point but related: If the FBI's internal security monitoring wings had not been clipped recently (largely of course because of its own past abuses), would a terrorist plot to seize more than a hundred hostages in Washington last week have been spotted in advance and averted?

There's no answer now. But the question has to be asked. Somewhere there's a middle ground between protecting the innocent public legally and exposing it to rampant violence. Let's not stop looking.